

# ***OVERSEER 1.9 PRIMER***

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***Administrative Software  
for Independent Schools***

## PREFACE

The development of the *Overseer* product began in August, 1993 under the name *Robust Software Solutions* which later became *Robust Software Inc.*

The first product release (*1.2*) in November, 1998 consisted of *Overseer Admin* and *Overseer LAN*.

The next major release (*1.6*) in August, 2001 included a *Grades* application for teachers, to complement *Overseer Admin* and *Overseer LAN*. These three applications were integrated into the *Overseer Suite*.

A stand-alone application, *Overseer Reports* was released in July, 2003. It was developed for use by school associations, or individual schools, to design custom report cards which were fully supported by a new release (*1.8*) of the *Overseer Suite*.

The *Overseer 1.9 Suite* includes several new features, reports, and documentation developed with the help of experienced users of *Overseer*. In particular, it includes *Overseer for Office Administrators*, a color manual with numerous screen images and a friendly tutorial style. It also includes an *Overseer Teacher's Handbook*, a step-by-step guide for teachers to use the *LAN* and *Grades* applications in a particular school. It is written in a form that can easily be customized for use by other schools based on their preferred operating procedures.

Be sure to browse or print the *Overseer for Office Administrators* manual and *Overseer Teacher's Handbook* which are available free on our web site and the *Overseer 1.9 CD*. These documents are not part of the *Overseer 1.9 Primer*.

We trust this latest release will meet your expectations and help you serve your school and community effectively.

# INTRODUCTION TO *OVERSEER 1.9*

This *Primer* was created to introduce administrators, principals, secretaries and teachers to the structure and capabilities of the *Overseer 1.9* suite of software applications.

A brief overview of the core features of *Overseer 1.9* appears in this introduction. This is followed by a copy of the *Getting Started Manual*, a detailed *Overview* of the database content, a *Teachers Guide* and a collation of *Sample Reports*. Check the web site of RSI ([www.robustsoftware.com](http://www.robustsoftware.com)) for information about *Overseer Reports*.

An installation CD for the *Overseer 1.9 Suite* is enclosed in an envelope attached to the back cover of this manual.

The *Overseer* distribution CD contains pdf files of all of the documents included in this *Overseer 1.9 Primer*, as well as other relevant manuals. Schools are free to print these for distribution to their staff, as required. You may need to install the *Adobe Acrobat Reader* on your PC in order to print these documents. This software may be downloaded free from Adobe's web site ([www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)).

*Overseer* was designed to meet the special needs of independent elementary schools by managing current information on prospective students, their families, relatives and affiliations, school society members, committees, volunteer groups and the school's supporting community, including businesses, medical/professional agencies and churches. *Overseer* also manages all the core information on students, teachers, classes, bus routes and curriculum as well as providing a suite of standard reports, including the printing of address labels and report cards.

## **1. The *Overseer Suite***

The *Overseer Suite* consists of three applications: *Overseer Admin*, *Overseer LAN* and *Overseer Grades*.

*Overseer Admin* may be used by a principal or secretary on a stand-alone PC. Alternatively, the master *Overseer* database may be installed on a central file server (or workstation) connected to a local area network (LAN) for shared access by several office staff. However, only one user at a time may open the *Overseer Admin* application. Small schools may use *Overseer Admin* free of charge. However, an *Overseer Admin site license* is required in order to enrol more than 75 students.

*Overseer LAN* is a multi-user application which was designed for use by teachers. It shares the same master *Overseer* database as *Overseer Admin*. It may be installed on a local area network (LAN) and may be used simultaneously by one or more teachers. The free version of *Overseer*

includes authorization for one designated teacher to use *Overseer LAN*. Additional *five-user Overseer LAN licenses*, or a *LAN site license*, are available from RSI. Both require that an *Overseer Admin site license* be purchased first.

*Overseer Grades* is a stand-alone application which was designed for use by teachers to record test scores and anecdotal information on students' progress during each term. *Overseer Grades* works with individual files in a personal, portable *Grades* database which must be created and periodically updated via *Overseer Admin* or *Overseer LAN*. At the end of each term, weighted average term marks, and comments may be automatically transferred to the *Overseer* master database. The free version of *Overseer* includes authorization for one designated teacher to use *Overseer Grades*. Additional *five-user Overseer Grades licenses*, or a *Grades site license*, are available from RSI. Both require that an *Overseer Admin site license* be purchased first.

An *Overseer Suite site license* is also available to grant unlimited usage of all three applications within one school.

## **2. Features of *Overseer 1.9***

### **On-Line Help**

Extensive on-line help exists for all display screens and may be invoked via the {F1} key in accordance with the Windows standard. Additional on-line 'How do I ...' documentation explains the inner workings of each *Overseer* application and guides the user through important high level tasks. *Overseer Admin* and *LAN* use a common help file, since *Overseer LAN* is just a subset of *Overseer Admin*. Teachers may therefore see information pertaining to features which are only available to *Admin* users. However, their awareness of available *Admin* features and reports may prove helpful when soliciting information from the school secretary.

### **Filters**

Extensive filter options are provided in *Overseer Admin* to allow a school secretary or principal to readily select a group of persons, families or organizations meeting predetermined criteria, prior to display or report generation. A limited number of filters is also provided within *Overseer LAN* for selecting subsets of students.

### **Report Cards**

*Overseer Admin* supports the design of (*default*) report card layouts for each division, and modification of report cards for individual classes. As of version 1.8, *custom* report card designs are also supported. These must be created via a separate *Overseer Reports 1.8* application. They are installed from design files, once for each class. Once installed, they are handled much the same as (*default*) report cards within the *Overseer Suite*.

Teachers may enter data and print report cards through *Overseer LAN*, using their own passwords to gain access to information on their home room students, as well as all students in classes for

which they teach one or more subject areas or subject components.

Teachers who use *Overseer Grades* may track the detailed progress of students during each term, and thereby avoid the manual data entry task at the end of each term.

### **Export Files**

A built-in export utility allows core information on selected children, students, families and organizations to be exported (via *Overseer Admin*) to comma-delimited text files for subsequent import into a spreadsheet or other financial package. A similar utility exists within *Overseer LAN* for core information on students.

### **Simplicity**

The *Overseer* master database maintains relational information among numerous entities, thereby enabling integration of diverse information and elimination of redundant data entry. Easy-to-use backup and restore utilities are provided so that the entire database can be compressed into a single file for easy transfer between computers (e.g. between home and school). A *Rebuild Database* utility restores corrupt index tables and packs the database.

### **Multi-Session Support**

Multi-session information may be stored simultaneously within *Overseer Admin*, so that historic, current and planned classes, bus routes and teacher assignments may all be managed at the same time. The user simply chooses an active date and session in order to view the state of the school's information on that day. Precise student enrolment and teacher employment periods may be maintained. A school calendar enables the secretary to maintain a current log of special days and events for any day of the school year. Meanwhile, directory information on children, adults, families and organizations is always current (like your telephone book).

Users of *Overseer LAN* and *Overseer Grades* always work with the current session (or school year) only.

### **Management of Email and Network Login Names**

Unique email/login names and passwords may be assigned automatically to every student when enrolled in the local school. However, these are recorded within *Overseer* strictly for data management purposes. They do not grant students any access privileges to the *Overseer* applications. They may also be edited to conform to existing usage.

Unique staff email/login names are also automatically assigned as new staff members are added. They may also be edited. They are used to identify staff members in all three applications.

### **And More ...**

*Overseer* supports the recording of daily attendance information by a secretary or (optionally) by home room teachers. Alternatively, attendances may be logged at the end of each term (via any

of the three applications). In all cases, term attendance statistics will automatically be transferred to student report cards.

*Overseer* may be downloaded from the RSI web site ([www.robustsoftware.com](http://www.robustsoftware.com)) or installed from an *Overseer* installation CD (attached to back cover of this manual). The application's features may be perused using the integrated *Demo* database to view the wide range of functionality offered.

Current order forms, pricing information, email support subscriptions and software updates are available via the RSI web site.

### **3. Minimum Requirements**

*Overseer* is a suite of 32-bit applications developed for the Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT 4, Windows 2000 and Windows XP operating systems. It has not been tested on Windows ME.

The target PC on which *Overseer* is to be installed should have a hard drive (with at least 100 MB of available disk space) and a VGA (or higher) color monitor. A keyboard and mouse are essential, as is a printer for reports. Internet access and email support on the target PC will simplify updating and supporting *Overseer*.

The required random access memory (RAM) and minimum CPU speed are largely determined by the operating system itself. We recommend the following:

Windows 95:	486/66 with 16 MB RAM ( Pentium 133 with 32 MB recommended)
Windows 98:	Pentium 133 with 32 MB RAM (Pentium 266 with 64 MB RAM recommended)
Windows NT 4:	Pentium 266 with 64 MB RAM
Windows 2000:	Pentium 2/450 with 128 MB RAM
Windows XP:	Pentium 4 with 256 MB RAM

A minimum of 256 KB cache memory is recommended (512 KB preferred), as well as a 1.44 MB (or higher) floppy drive. Some form of tape or disk backup medium is recommended for your school's database, which could be 10 - 20 MB in size within a few years for a school of 200 - 300 students. A CD-ROM drive is highly recommended but not mandatory.